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Source: *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 81, No. 1 (Winter, 2008), pp. 95-126

Published by: The George Washington University Institute for Ethnographic Research

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/30052741>

Accessed: 20-02-2024 00:18 +00:00

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MEANING-MAKING IN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Social Movements and Collective Identity: A Decentered, Dialogic View¹

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Abstract

Collective identity entered the social movements literature as an early recognition of the importance of meaning-making in shaping movement participants and influencing movement actions. In this article, we go against the more usual practice of treating movements as unified actors, and instead, take a decentered, dialogic approach that recognizes the difficulties and contentiousness of producing movement identities amidst multiple discourses and practices. We illustrate this framework with three ethnographic cases from Canada, Scotland and Nepal, which highlight collective identity and meaning-making through place-based, contingent cultural processes. The cases use the concepts of figured worlds, alter-versions of identity, and cultural artifacts to show how collective identity develops dialogically in practice both within and outside of movements. [Keywords: Collective identity, social movements, dialogic processes, women's activism, First Nations activism, global justice movement, Nepal, Scotland, Canada]

Scholars of social movements have endeavored, over the past several decades, to incorporate “culture” into conceptualizations of social movements (e.g., Calhoun 1994; Cohen 1985; Gamson 1991; Johnston and Klandermans 1995; Melucci 1989; Stryker et al. 2000; Swidler 1986). Early contributions included “collective identity,” “frames,” and other products of collective meaning-making that were considered to be mediators of movement action (see Kurzman, this issue). More recent formulations recognize the pervasiveness of “cultural” phenomena in all aspects of social action, including “rational action” (Polletta 2004:162–163). Meanwhile, anthropologists, though still considerably outnumbered by sociologists and political scientists, have increased their presence in the interdisciplinary field of social movement studies, bringing with them a variety of conceptualizations of cultural phenomena and movements (e.g., Escobar In Press; Satterfield 2002; Slocum 2004).² In this article, we consider an emerging decentered, dialogic approach to social movements that is particularly congenial to anthropological emphases on cultural processes. We concentrate in particular on dialogic processes of collective identity, drawing several points from our own ethnographic studies of First Nations activism in Canada, the global justice movement network, and women’s activism in Nepal.

Social Movements in the Everyday: A Decentered Approach

In a forthcoming book about the *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra* (the Rural Landless Workers’ Movement, commonly referred to as the MST), the geographer Wendy Wolford provides an exceptionally convincing argument for “decentering the study of social movements”—that is, for paying more attention to the *diversity* of place-based participants who are incorporating movement relations, concepts and practices into their everyday lives. As Wolford points out, approaches that concentrate on leaders and their strategic accounts of the movement, in effect, “assume and assign an ontological coherence to the category of movement—a solid ‘thing-ness’ that is rarely tenable on the ground” (Wolford In Press:6). Even the highly effective MST, which does have a central coordinating committee, and established political symbols, slogans, membership norms, and expectations, is not inevitably cohesive. “It [the movement] is as much a deliberate attempt to create unity as it is an expression of such” (Wolford In Press:6). The book, based on extensive ethnographic study in the southern area of Brazil where the movement originated, and in the northeast-

ern region where the movement sought to expand, brilliantly shows how and why MST leaders' vision was not as appealing in the northeast, with its different material and symbolic environment—namely its history of estate-plantation sugarcane production. Thus, a decentered approach calls for the ethnographic study of place-based—or situated—movement actors and the cultural identities, discourses and practices they promote. Through this analytic lens, movements are better seen not as relatively unified actors, but, as multiple sources of cultural discourses competing to inform the everyday actions of movement participants.

Defining Collective Identity: Individual Belonging and Collective Action

As multi-faceted and dynamic cultural productions which form and reform in local and sociohistoric time/space, collective identities defy static description, and the concept itself resists definition. How can a phrase or two convey, among other complexities, the always emergent quality of a collective identity? How can it signal the fragile dependence of a collective identity on the peripatetic relationships of individuals to a movement; on visions for change that have not yet, and may never be, institutionalized; on forms of organization—including acephalous ones—that transform over the life of the movement, and on shifting relations of power within and outside of the movement? Acknowledging these difficulties, we define the collective identity of a social movement as participants' shared sense of the movement as a collective actor—as a dynamic force for change—that they identify with and are inspired to support in their own actions.³ Elaborated more fully, a collective identity develops within an imagined world (e.g., Wolford In Press)—or, to use another term, a figured world⁴ (Holland et al. 1998)—which is a realm of interpretation and action generated by the participants of a movement through their shared activities and commitments that imagines the terrain of struggle, the powers of opponents, and the possibilities of a changed world.

The definition subsumes two major dimensions: belonging and action. Common definitions of “collective identity” in anthropology and other social sciences emphasize identity in relation to difference. They assume that people who are considered culturally, racially, ethnically, nationally, or in some other way distinctive such that they warrant differential treatment, have a basis for solidarity and individual belonging. A similar sense

of collective identity as mediating belonging and determining who is included in the group and who is excluded is also important in social movement studies.⁵ Polletta and Jasper, in their extensive review of collective identity and social movements from a sociological viewpoint, similarly emphasize belonging and connection: they define collective identity as “an individual’s cognitive, moral, and emotional connection with a broader community, category, practice, or institution. It is a perception of a shared status or relation, which may be imagined rather than experienced directly...” (2001:285; see also Gamson 1991:157).⁶

Although these and other authors tend to define collective identity in terms of its potential for solidarity and belonging, they also mention the importance of collective identity as a basis for collective action, which is our emphasis. Polletta and Jasper, despite their focus on the individual’s connection to the collective identity, treat collective identity in other parts of their review as a basis for action, including choices among strategies, tactics, targets, organizational forms and deliberative styles. Taylor and Whittier similarly emphasize belonging in their definition of collective identity, yet clearly relate identity to action. After drawing on existing social movement literature to define collective identity as “the shared definition of a group that derives from members’ common interests, experiences and solidarity” (1992:105), they go on to analyze in detail the process of collective identity construction in lesbian feminist communities, drawing links between identity construction and action.⁷ Melucci, one of the main contributors to the conceptualization of collective identity of social movements, also stresses the problem of “solidarity” and “claims of belonging” in much of his writing.⁸ At the same time, his primary definition of collective identity, “the process of ‘constructing’ an action system” (1996:70) stresses identity as a basis for action (see also Melucci 1995). Perhaps because of his focus on the constitution of the movement as an actor—a focus we share—he, more clearly than many social movements scholars, emphasizes the importance of identity as a platform for action as well as a basis of group solidarity and individual belonging.⁹

We also share with Melucci a strong focus on the ongoing and profound challenge faced by movements to produce a collective identity that is at least coherent enough to allow a modicum of self-organization and collective action. A decentered approach to social movements clarifies some of this complexity by recognizing that versions of the collective identity of a movement are being formed in multiple sites (e.g., at protests, in the

building of alliances, through media work) and places (e.g., different locales, different communities, any headquarters that the movement may have). This is obviously the case for nascent social movements with relatively few means to coordinate across locales. But, even in cases with complex organizational structures, leaders' formulations of a coherent collective identity for the movement may be compromised by place-based processes outside their control, as Wolford (In Press) shows for efforts to extend the MST into northeastern Brazil.

Collective Identity Formation as a Decentered, Dialogic Process

Collective identity formation, as with all other cultural phenomena (Tedlock and Mannheim 1995), is fundamentally dialogic. That is, a movement's collective identity is continually emerging, forming and reforming between people and groups in multiple sites and places of contentious practice. More specifically, following a Bakhtinian conceptualization, identities are constructed in dialogues across difference between two or more actors with the result that new cultural forms of knowledge are produced and subsequently appropriated for use in later interactions (Bakhtin 1981; Tedlock and Mannheim 1995).¹⁰ Holland and Lave (2001) develop this approach as "social practice theory."¹¹

Terre Satterfield (2002), in one of the few sustained ethnographic studies of the formation of movement identities, provides a detailed illustration of dialogic processes at work in collective identity formation.¹² During a period when the fight to save old growth forests in Oregon was at a peak, Satterfield studied the environmental organizations pushing for timbering restrictions as well as the pro-logging groups that emerged to counter them. Her simultaneous focus on two of the major opponents in the so-called spotted-owl-controversy directed her attention to interactions between the movements. Satterfield's ethnography shows the depth of engagement of each side with the other, and the extent to which the two sides were, in effect, constructing their cultural identities through a "dialogue across difference" (2002:8). She recounts loggers' anguish over what we refer to below as "alter versions" of their movement's identity, in which they were figured by environmentalists as behaving with inappropriate anger. Especially important for their identities were their dueling bids for the cultural authority and the authenticity of their respective

forms of knowledge about the environment.¹³ In her case, as in ours, dialogic processes of “orchestrating” multiple discourses and versions of self are central in the cultural production of collective identities. This is true for all three of our cases as well, although in two of the three, changed relations with the state led to the emergence of contentiously engaged dialogic partners from within the movement.

Case Studies

Ethnographic studies are particularly well-suited to research on collective identity as an emergent, processual, dialogic and decentered formation. We examine aspects of three place-based movement-related developments from our research that put to use the conceptualization of collective identity described above. In each case, a changing relationship or interaction with the state sets the stage for the dialogic processes of identity construction that we describe. The first case raises questions about a signal success of a movement that leads to the resignification of a key activity in the figured world of First Nations activists. The second highlights the potential force of “alter versions” of movement identities, with a focus on ways in which global justice activists are “addressed” by police. The third encourages attention to the materiality of meaning-making, with a focus on the way in which cultural artifacts take on a life of their own, abruptly reshaping collective identity processes of a Nepali women’s movement. All three cases illustrate ways in which collective identities develop dialogically in practice. We chose the cases because they focus on points at which movement identities are being challenged, destabilized, or interrupted. Specifically, distinctions or boundaries that are significant in marking collective identity are disrupted and/or reconfigured by a refigured relationship with the state (through a court decision in the first case, police practices in the second, and party politics in the third). It is in moments like these of dialogic refiguring in response to upheavals, uncertainties and challenges in the everyday life of movements and movement work that the dialogic dynamics of collective identity are most apparent.

Challenges to Collective-Identity After a Movement’s Success

In the case of Mi’kmaq First Nation fishers in Atlantic Canada, we see the inadvertent undermining of a key collective cultural identity and the

ensuing reformulation of the figured world of Mi'kmaq fishers and activists that followed on their success in a legal battle for recognition of their treaty right to fish commercially without state interference. The dialogic reworking of what it means to *be a Mi'kmaq fisher* after a shift in available cultural and economic resources provides an insightful, place-based portrait of the unanticipated fragmenting of a movement identity. Drawing on Holland et al.'s concept of *figured worlds* as "a realm of interpretation in which a particular set of characters and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others" (1998:52), I (Fox) show the fragility of one type of movement identity when the figured world informing it becomes untenable. Figured worlds are collectively imagined worlds in which people and groups "*do*" movement action, such as protesting to assert rights to access natural resources.¹⁴ Collective identities form in relation to a figured world, for instance, the figured world of aboriginal rights.

* * *

"There's no culture in this business," Matthew Albert assured me as he picked through lobster traps, measuring and separating larger lobsters into coolers and flinging the smaller ones back into the Atlantic. Matthew is a 31-year-old Mi'kmaq man and has been the captain of a commercial fishing vessel for six years. That day, we were checking his traps in the Northumberland Strait between mainland Canada and Prince Edward Island, navigating through a web of hundreds of bobbing buoys marking other fishers' traps. His approach to lobster fishing is shared by most of the 200 or so commercial fishers from his home on the Salt Harbour reserve in eastern New Brunswick.¹⁵ It is a relatively new attitude, however, as large-scale Mi'kmaq commercial fisheries have emerged only in the last decade, ushered in by a 1999 landmark legal ruling known as the *Marshall* decision, which upheld 18th century Mi'kmaq treaty rights to fish for profit.¹⁶

The 1999 *Marshall* decision by the Supreme Court of Canada was the culmination of years of activism, research and organizing by Mi'kmaq people and their supporters, and was celebrated as a significant victory by Mi'kmaq activists and their allies, as well as a triumph for the broader aboriginal peoples' rights movement in Canada and throughout the world. At issue was defendant Donald Marshall, Jr.'s claim that he—and all Mi'kmaq people—had a treaty right to sell their catch without federal interference. Though the case centered around a legal—not a cultural—claim to treaty rights,

elements of Mi'kmaq culture, history and identity figured prominently in the discourses of Mi'kmaq leaders and activists during the trial (Coates 2000; personal interviews). For instance, in numerous media interviews during and just after the Marshall decision, Mi'kmaq leaders proclaimed that they planned to develop locally-administrated commercial fisheries that would reflect culturally-appropriate management practices, bolster local economies and promote self-governance (see also CBC 2000a; CBC 2000b; CBC 2002). When the Court ruled in Marshall's favor, the road was paved for the development of large-scale Mi'kmaq commercial fisheries, which, prior to this time, had been prohibitively expensive and severely restricted by federal regulations and, some claim, racism. However, while the *Marshall* decision signaled a victory for the movement (which I take to include people working locally, nationally and internationally for the rights of aboriginal peoples), it also initiated a dramatic reorganization of the cultural resources of the movement at the local level, profoundly affecting how Mi'kmaq fishers today are figuring their identities in relation to culture, history, new economic opportunities and the movement itself. Whereas the collective identity mobilized by the movement leading up to the *Marshall* decision was based in large part on a Mi'kmaq cultural-historical identity where fish and fishing are central, the Mi'kmaq commercial fisheries that have developed since the movement's success promote individualism and capitalist accumulation, resulting in a disassociation of fishing and culture, which, I suggest, may be leading to the dissolution of the very movement that worked to secure the right to fish commercially.

For centuries, Mi'kmaq people have struggled against colonial governments to retain access to and control over their culture, land and natural resources in their traditional territories, which extend over the present-day provinces of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Quebec, and into the state of Maine (Prins 1996). These enduring struggles have shaped Mi'kmaq relationships with the state, and have guided the actions and discourses which coalesced in a social movement for aboriginal and treaty rights—part of a national and international aboriginal peoples' movement which gained strength in the 1960s and 1970s (Prins 1996). In Mi'kmaq territory, the collective-identity-making of this movement built on the figured world of Mi'kmaq culture and identity as communally-focused, emphasized the importance of hunting and fishing, and insisted on the continued validity of a series of 18th century treaties made with the British Crown which guaranteed the

Mi'kmaq people rights to access their traditional lands and resources. It was out of this figured world that the identity of a Mi'kmaq fisher as a *cultural* identity was constructed, and, until the *Marshall* ruling in 1999, this was largely the fisher identity that was practiced in Salt Harbour, where I conducted fieldwork for 16 months between 2004 and 2007.

Prior to and during the *Marshall* trial, the figured world of the Mi'kmaq fisher was constructed dialogically by drawing on two main cultural resources, one local and the other national. First, movement supporters employed local cultural-historical practices and discourses about the importance of fishing; and second, the movement was able to take advantage of the movement identity and momentum from a 1990 Supreme Court of Canada ruling, known as the *Sparrow* decision, which upheld First Nations' aboriginal right (a culturally/historically-based right) to fish for food, social and ceremonial purposes.¹⁷ Together, movement leaders and participants mobilized these cultural resources to engage in dialogues about the meaning and practice of fishing, in the process authoring the figured world of Mi'kmaq fishing as a primarily *cultural* world.

Before the *Marshall* decision, the figured world of fishing in Salt Harbour was inextricably linked to Mi'kmaq culture, history, food and poverty. Fish, as many elders explained to me, was a daily necessity in Salt Harbour until the 1960s;¹⁸ employment was scarce, social welfare allowances were very low and families depended on fishing for sustenance—especially through the long winters when salted, smoked and bottle-preserved fish kept families fed. Ewing Stevens, an elder who still actively fishes for food recalled how, when he was a boy, some families ran out of fish to eat during the winter, and had to wait for the spring runs. He remembered watching one little boy so hungry that he sat by the river in the spring and ate the first fish he caught raw. With few exceptions, Mi'kmaq fishers did not earn much money selling their catch, and in most cases, were prohibited from doing so without a federally-issued license.¹⁹ In this world, Mi'kmaq fishers were “food fishers” and food fishing was both a sustenance and a cultural activity—a way to define oneself as a Mi'kmaq person (poor and Native), as opposed to other Canadians (wealthier and non-Native).²⁰ As Thomas Whitmann, an elder, explained to me “Our tradition lies between our culture and our food chain; our food chain, it has to be salmon. It has to be all fish, really.” This sentiment was echoed by Jack Albert, a former employee at the Salt Harbour Fisheries office, who told me, “Here on the reserve, everyone's a fisherman. If

you're a Native then you're a fisherman. ... It's part of my heritage, it's part of my culture. It's one thing that's been done here for years and years and years—further than I can count back.” For these Salt Harbour residents, fishing meant *food* fishing, which meant *cultural* fishing.

Discourse and practices that figured the world of pre-*Marshall* Mi'kmaq fishers were also influenced by the 1990 *Sparrow* ruling. The *Sparrow* case was well-known to Salt Harbour fishers, who often invoked it when describing the importance of fishing and the maintenance of Mi'kmaq culture.²¹ Older fishers I interviewed (who were rarely commercial fishers) often linked the *Sparrow* and *Marshall* cases together in their descriptions of fishing and fishing rights. The *Sparrow* decision, they told me, afforded them the right to fish based on their ancestors' status as first occupants of the land (a cultural right). *Marshall*, they said, extended that right to include commercial fishing. This link was usually made without acknowledgement of the cultural/historical basis of the *Sparrow* case versus the legal/treaty basis of the *Marshall* case; instead the two cases were connected rhetorically as two great victories in the movement for First Nations' rights with primacy given to the cultural aspects of fishing. Thus, when the *Marshall* case reached the Supreme Court of Canada in 1999, the movement for treaty rights was still largely organized around shared ideas of fishing as central to Mi'kmaq cultural identity.

Just eight years after the *Marshall* ruling, however, that vision had been dramatically altered in Salt Harbour. The collective identity used to mobilize people during the *Marshall* trial was no longer relevant, as the meaning of fish had shifted from food to commodity. Mi'kmaq fishers' attitudes and practices were changing to reflect the individual, capitalist ethic of the commercial fishing industry where prestige is accorded based on high catches and monetary accumulation, rather than on the “traditional” Mi'kmaq cultural ethic of taking only what you need and sharing with neighbors. In short, the figured world of the “cultural Mi'kmaq fisher” mobilized during the *Sparrow* and *Marshall* trials had ceased to be a tenable organizing point for Mi'kmaq fishers after the movement's success.

Responsibility for fishing and maintaining a vessel, coupled with the corporate structure of the industry, has led Salt Harbour commercial fishers to work individualistically, catching and selling as much fish as they can to ensure that they can meet their costs, leaving little or no time for “cultural fishing” in the river for food or sport. A financial settlement negotiated between the Salt Harbour Band and the federal government

resulted in millions of dollars being pumped into the community to purchase vessels, gear and training for new fishers; in exchange, Salt Harbour agreed to limit their catch and abide by federal conservation regulations. During my time in Salt Harbour, the community owned over 70 top-of-the-line commercial vessels, and by several accounts had one of the ten largest fleets in the region. However, every fisher I spoke with agreed that although they had high hopes for Salt Harbour commercial fisheries, very few were earning a living at it; some were breaking even, but many were in debt. They blamed poor planning and management on the part of the Band and the federal government, coupled with declining fish stocks, and sometimes a lack of training or initiative on the part of the fishers themselves. For these fishers (many of whom are under 30 and were too young to have participated in the movement for aboriginal and treaty rights during the *Sparrow* or *Marshall* trials), trying to meet the financial demands of working a commercial vessel has meant that they have had to equate fishing with business, not with culture. As Stu Louis, one of the community's top fishers explained, "You have to run it like a business; you got no choice. There's so much money going out, and if you're not going to run it like a business, it's going to fail."

The pull of consumer culture has also shaped new Mi'kmaq fisher identities. For some, the commercial fisheries have afforded them their first opportunity to buy new vehicles, electronics, and name-brand food and clothing for their families (much of it bought on credit). An economic development officer in Salt Harbour related a story about the unexpected pride felt by the wife of a commercial fisher the first time she could afford to buy brand-name cereal at the supermarket in town. I heard similar stories from others in the community about a man who ate a beef steak for the first time in his life with the money he earned working after *Marshall*, and about someone who could finally afford high quality rubber work boots. Not everyone in the community has welcomed this newfound access to consumer goods, though. Some Salt Harbour residents who were not fishing commercially derided commercial fishers as "greedy" and short-sighted, asserting that very few of them had ever learned to fish (for food in the river) before the *Marshall* decision. Upon seeing a young man steering a commercial vessel into the wharf one day, my elder companion complained, "But he's not even a fisherman!"

There may appear to be an inherent contradiction between the historical First Nations' rights movement based on collective rights and culture,

and local trends toward the individualistic, non-cultural exercise of treaty rights like that in the emerging Salt Harbour commercial fisheries, but such contradictions are not uncommon as movement participants work to situate themselves in complex and shifting fields of power, politics and economy. Indeed, the *Marshall* decision is transforming the social, cultural and economic landscape of fishing in Atlantic Canada, and in the process, has created a new and contentious space for negotiating what it means to *be a Mi'kmaq fisher*. At this point, it remains unclear what new types of social identities will coalesce in Mi'kmaq fishing communities, and whether what Mi'kmaq people think of as their culture—once key in organizing the treaty rights movement—will remain a salient element in the production of the collective identity of such a movement. In Salt Harbour, the fragmentation of the collective identity is reflected in the relative inability of the community to face collectively the end of post-*Marshall* government funding, and to organize themselves to develop and take stands on management plans. Considering these recent changes through the analytic lens of social practice theory provides insights into the local reformulation of Mi'kmaq fisher identities through contentious dialogues and new practices, as well as having broader implications for understanding how transformations in figured worlds of identity and action can alter the course of a social movement.

Alter Versions of Collective Identity Amidst Global Justice Activism

In our decentered, dialogic framework, we take the figured worlds of movements to be produced, in part, through dialogic relations among people inside and outside of movements. Movement participants' collective identities develop through movement practices that engage outsiders, including the institutions that movements target, the police, media workers, and bystanders. Meanwhile, those outside of movements also develop senses of a movement and its commitments. Identity constructions of a movement that develop among those outside of a movement, including movement opponents, movement targets, and would-be movement participants, for example, are what we call "alter versions," in resonance with symbolic interactionism.²² In a similar vein, Melucci describes collective identity as a process of negotiating among constantly shifting forces, including balancing between identifications declared by

actors themselves and identifications given by adversaries, allies and others outside the collective (1995:52). Thus, at any given moment, movement self-understandings and alter versions of a movement's identity are engaged with one another, often contentiously.²³ In the following case, we pursue an example of this kind of dialogic engagement in the context of global justice movement activity in which law enforcement agents used alter versions of movement identity in unpredictable ways to "address" both activists and the local public among which they circulated.

Protest Actions During the G8 Summit

In July 2005, a quarter of a million global justice activists gathered near Gleneagles, Scotland, host to the annual G8 Summit. Since the mid-1990s, G8 Summits have been accompanied by mass demonstrations with some degree of international participation. The size and public awareness of these demonstrations, similar to those organized around WTO and IMF/World Bank meetings since the 1990s, peaked in 2001 at the G8 Summit in Genoa, Italy, but significant numbers of people continue to be mobilized in opposition to the political and economic power structures these institutions represent. In this section, I (Daro) draw on a brief episode from my ethnographic research among summit protesters and host city residents to suggest a few ways in which forces external to movement organizations—the police, in conjunction with the press—have the potential to shape processes of collective identity construction linked to global justice activism.

While the bulk of global justice activities during the G8 Summit took place in rural areas on the outskirts of the resort town of Gleneagles, many protest events happened in nearby Edinburgh. These events included a legally-permitted, celebrity-studded rally and march with the slogan "Make Poverty History," and an unpermitted street party called the "Carnival for Full Enjoyment." The distinction between these two events was extensively elaborated in local media, by police, and by certain activists as well; the characteristics of each event—corporate endorsements, international NGOs, involvement of political leaders, and a major music celebrity concert versus a decentralized street takeover—mapped easily onto the divide constantly being constructed in official and popular discourse, between "legitimate" and "illegitimate" protest that is central to so many alter versions of social movement identities.

Protest Policing During the G8 Summit

The policing of protest events throughout the area during the G8 Summit was complex. There were Scottish as well as English police forces, and a national force that established check-points on major roads, searching people leaving the rurally located, activist-built “Ecovillage”—an expansive village complete with bakeries, cafes, DJ lounges, a kids area, healing spaces, meeting spaces, information booths, composting toilets, and a campground where the majority of activists stayed.²⁴ The presence of police was overwhelming in the cities, towns and rural areas near Gleneagles, and the presence of *English* police in these areas was acutely offensive to many (Scottish) locals. Tensions between (some) local residents and police intensified and intersected with summit protests, complicating the figured world of global justice activism that developed in Scotland, as will be shown below. Some of the law enforcement strategies used were typical of global justice movement policing worldwide, for example, the flurry of advance warnings articulated by police, and spread across headlines in many local papers, about violent anarchist outsiders coming to town.²⁵ The *Daily Telegraph* reported on several investigations conducted by detectives in Italy and in Britain:

One senior detective who monitors anarchist groups said: “...We know that some Italian anarchists have already entered the country and are staying at squats and safe houses with British sympathisers. They are planning major violent disruptions to the Gleneagles summit and we will be powerless to stop them” (Bamber 2005).

Also typical was the use of “snatch squads” to physically chase down, tackle, and arrest targeted individuals (especially those perceived as “leaders”) within crowds. Both of these policing practices—advance warnings about violence and snatch squads during actions—resonate with a fairly consistent set of divisions that activists use to draw distinctions among themselves: those who are willing or desire to be arrested versus those who are not; those who are targeted by police because they appear dangerous versus those who intentionally or unintentionally appear “harmless”; those who have endured various degrees of police brutality and/or incarceration versus those with less experience being criminalized.

While these distinctions—and the policing practices that reinforce them—have been important in self-authoring²⁶ processes within global

justice activist communities worldwide for many years, law enforcement during the G8 Summit included regional and local particularities. For example, during the Carnival for Full Enjoyment, police demonstrated a distinctively British, highly ceremonial “divide and contain” crowd control tactics: police would unfold from vans into crisp linear formations along the sides of a crowd, and then, triggered by sharp, coded calls and gestures, would dart through the crowd, splitting it down the middle, pushing the sections of the crowd away from each other and sometimes temporarily boxing in one section or the other (the crowd was usually—but not always—released once control was sufficiently established). These well-rehearsed performances were spectacles in themselves; there were long moments where groups of hundreds of activists, mixed with local bystanders, were positioned as spectators, simultaneously amused and anxious about being caught on the “contained” side of the formation. Throughout the afternoon, police attempted to identify and contain the dangerous elements within the crowd, however this proved impossible because of the mixtures of different types of activists (including self-identified anarchists, anti-capitalists, church-based activists, NGO workers, and other “Make Poverty History” activists), families, shoppers, workers, and angry locals ready for confrontation.²⁷

While clashes between protesters and police were inevitable, it was very often Edinburgh locals not directly involved in the global justice movement who instigated street fights with police. One local news outlet reported that when several hundred onlookers gathered at a central intersection, “chants of ‘scum, scum, scum’ were hurled at the police. Later, some of the crowd began hurling stones and cobbles at the advancing police line...a large number were locals” (Brown et al. 2005). And an activist reported to the local Indymedia wire:

There seemed to be no “centre” of activity, and there were certainly no “activists” left at this point. I cycled around a long way to get to the other side of the police line, where four or five people were being detained with plastic handcuffs in front of a boarded up mobile phone shop. They were definitely not pink, black, clown, or any other bloc. Just ordinary folk.

The “pink, black, clown, and other blocs” referred to are different activist groups—some well-coordinated and some informal—that participated in

the Carnival for Full Enjoyment. The U.K.-based Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army, in particular, had a central presence in the Carnival, as did the U.S.-based Infernal Noise Brigade, a talented activist marching band. Both of these activist groups engaged with police fairly directly, but never aggressively.²⁸ The Edinburgh residents who I saw become involved in skirmishes with police were mostly Scottish men (but also a few women) aged 20–40 who wore brand-name sporting outfits (e.g., Adidas jackets, Nike t-shirts, etc.); they provoked police by throwing bottles and verbal insults, and occasionally by directly attacking officers, sometimes with protesters from elsewhere passively looking on, stunned. These locals were later described among activists as the “track suit gang” because of their athletic outfits and aggressive behavior.

Law Enforcement and the Figured World of Global Justice Activism

Protest policing did not end once the protests were over. After the Summit concluded, the Ecovillage was dismantled, and Edinburgh returned to its own rhythm, the legal proceedings for arrested activists dragged on for months. In a twist on established strategies, police turned to the local press to extend their power of enforcement, and thereby enlisted the media—and the local public—more directly into the work of constructing a particular alter version of global justice movement identity. In early November, the Lothian and Borders Police issued a press release appealing to the “public” to help identify people involved in the Carnival for Full Enjoyment. Thirty-one photos of individuals were published in local papers along with the press release; the photos were stills from surveillance cameras used during the protests and were accompanied by text such as the following:

Some of the people featured in the photographs are very clear—we just need a name to put to the face. I would like to appeal to anybody who knows the identity of any of these people to contact the incident room.

We hope issuing these images will prompt a positive response from the public who were rightly appalled at the scenes they witnessed in the city centre in July.

This is not a case of police being vindictive but concentrating on

those people whose criminal activity marred an otherwise peaceful week of legitimate demonstration. Edinburgh and the officers who policed the events are still proud of the way it was facilitated.

The appeal to Edinburgh residents for help in the prosecution of activists was a clear attempt to articulate an alliance between locals and police, and a “line of antagonism” (Laclau and Mouffe 1985) against protesters.

While processes of collective identity construction among global justice activists are often extremely self-reflexive, intentional, and creative, police tactics worldwide have come to present many challenges to these processes that are beyond the control of movement participants. In this case, the use of local media to recruit local citizens to participate directly in police work demonstrates the extent to which criminalization has become part of how global justice activism is figured publicly. The divide between “good” and “bad” protesters is under constant construction in public discourse, and the police strategy used in Scotland meant that not only activists but also locals in the host city were called on to answer, “which side are you on?” To “answer” the call for participation in police efforts would mobilize (and actualize) alter versions of movement identity organized around the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate protest.

However, similar to the difficulty evident in protest policing on the streets of Edinburgh, there was a tension in the attempt by Lothian police to enlist the public onto their side: such efforts at alignment are never fully successful, or “sutured” (Laclau and Mouffe 1985). While it addresses a public who was “rightly appalled” at the protests they witnessed, it simultaneously addresses readers as people who may have been involved in the protests themselves:

...if anyone recognizes themselves in these pictures released today we would urge you to make contact with us before we come knocking on your door. We believe the majority of these people live in the United Kingdom and I personally believe most will live in the Lothians and Scottish Borders area as a high percentage of those who have already been traced do.

This explicit admission that the protesters identified as most criminal may indeed be part of the local population unsettles the anticipatory alter version of global justice activists as dangerous outsiders. The public is dou-

bly “addressed”—as both potential participant in, and potential target of, police efforts—and thereby called on to author themselves within the figured world of global justice activism in the terms presented (either rightly appalled or else guilty).

Collective identity construction among global justice activists is complicated by these and other forces “outside” of activist communities. The resulting alter versions of activist identities can present dilemmas for those involved in movement activities and, in some cases, for those on the edges of movements (e.g., tentatively sympathetic observers, potential allies, reporters, spontaneously engaged “one-time” activists with locally particular agendas, and locals inconvenienced, frightened, or outraged by protests). Those within and on the edges of movements are “addressed” by alter versions of the legitimate and illegitimate protester, versions which might impose artificial distinctions or blur existing ones. This example points out important features of collective identity processes among social movement participants, including evidence that state actors have an interest in the construction of what we are calling alter versions of movement identities. We argue that it is worth exploring the extent to which movement participants, as well as their temporary non-activist hosts, feel themselves “addressed” by such alter versions of movement identities, and the extent to which these identities are mobilized in the figured worlds of activism.

Nepali Women’s Activism: Cultural Artifacts and a Disruption of the Collective Identity

The third case comes from ethnographic research on women’s activism in Central Nepal. Over the period of research, the Nepali government capitulated to demands for a multi-party political system, a development that inadvertently stimulated internal dialogic processes in the production of the collective identity of the movement.²⁹ The softening of government repression and the sense of new possibilities resulted in the increased popularity of a particular type of song at Tij, the annual women’s festival that had been the primary time/space of the movement. Tij songs were important cultural tools in the authoring of the women’s movement and, as discussed below, the increased popularity of one form of Tij song introduced an unintended split in the women’s groups constituting the movement.

* * *

On the day of the Tij festival in 1990 the people of Naudada, a sub-district unit in Central Nepal, came together at the *tati* (gathering place), a flat space surrounded by a temple, several community buildings and the steep hillsides characteristic of the area. They came to watch the women, dressed in beautiful saris, dance. They came to hear the women sing the Tij songs that they had been composing and practicing in the weeks preceding the festival. This was the second festival that Debra Skinner, my colleague and co-author, had attended, and my (Holland's) first. In 1991, we returned again. The songs were and had been for a long time, critical of women's treatment in Nepali society, and, we concluded, based on some 15 months of ethnographic research stretched over a six year period, that the making and singing of Tij songs for the festival constituted an important strand of women's activism in Naudada.³⁰

An impression of one of the most popular types of Tij songs can be gained from the following lines. The song is an example of *dukha* (suffering/hardship) songs; it points to the limited resources and rights of a wife caught in a bad marriage.

*...Listen to the description of the drunken husband.
 Rising in the morning, he goes down to the hotel,
 Who will do the household chores?
 The hotel girl has probably [already] made the tea [for the day].
 The raksi (distilled liquor) has finished all the money.
 The household wealth has all gone to the hironi (a cinema role—refers
 to the hotel girl here).
 The most fertile land is all finished because of his drinking raksi.
 ...
 If I say, "Don't drink," he replies, "I'm not drinking your father's
 [property]."
 The most fertile land is gone and still he does not know [how much he
 has spent].
 The best land is gone because of the drunkard husband,
 ...
 The household property is not mine.
 The housewife is an outsider.*

Tij Songs as Cultural Artifacts in Nepali Women's Activism

Remarkably, women, at some point in the past, had together created a space at the Tij festival for songs of critical commentary about women's lowly position in Nepali society. For a brief period each year, the festival constituted a time and space for women to gather in small groups and critically reflect, through song, upon their lives as women. In this space, they produced material for an alternative consciousness—a sense of themselves that was different from that encouraged by religious teachings and the treatment they received in their families.

For the women who sang at Tij, the emotional and attentive center of the festival was in the convening of groups of women—whom we refer to as the *didi/bahini*, the elder/younger sisters, of the *gaon* or hamlet where they lived. The girls and young women gathered at night in practice sessions to collaborate in making songs, to practice them, and, in the process, joke and have fun. But, even more important, the festival was marked emotionally by the reunification of the *didi/bahini* with their out-married sisters and cousins. Following practices of exogamy and arranged marriages, the parents of Naudada usually married their daughters to men living in other, often far away, places. At Tij, young married women were permitted to return to their natal homes. Coming home was a powerful emotional event for both the women who returned and their *didi/bahini* left in the *gaon*.

In the emotional atmosphere of Tij, the songs opened up an alternative world and a liberatory vision of how things might change. The figured world evoked by the type of Tij songs presented above is the cultural world of family and relatives where women, especially daughters, daughters in law, and wives, are given unfair amounts of work, inappropriately denied rights to property and other family resources, and cruelly left vulnerable to bad treatment and neglect at the hands of husbands. There, in the weeks around the festival, women performed the figured world envisioned in Tij songs in which the unfairness of women's treatment was recognized with the possibility that a future of equality might be created. These were the components of the collective identity.³¹

We encountered indications that the women could turn the complaints of Tij into protest action. When we returned to Naudada in 1991, we heard reports of remarkable, unprecedented events that had happened several months back, around the time of the election. Women had formed a procession and marched through several hamlets shouting demands: Men, stop

drinking alcohol! Stop gambling! Don't marry your daughters so young! Give women equal rights! Fifteen women armed with sticks surrounded a man who had beaten his wife. These women threatened that if he ever beat his wife again, they would beat him. No doubt women felt less fearful of political repression after the successful Pro-Democracy Movement of 1990–1991. But, the content of the demands—the call to allow daughters as well as sons to go to school, for example—was closely connected to the content of *dukha* songs customarily sung at the Tij festival.³²

Rajniti Songs, Songbooks, the World of Party Politics and a Disruption of the Collective Identity

In 1991, Skinner and I noticed some striking differences from the previous Tij festivals that we had observed. For one, a new group sang at the festival. It was not composed of *didibahini* (sisters and cousins) from a single *gaon*, but of female students from a number of different *gaons*.³³ Their commonalty was not their *gaon*, but their status as *bidyarthi* (students) and their affiliation with one of Nepal's recently emerged political parties. Another difference was that many of the “educated” members of the various Tij groups had composed a different type of Tij song, a type referred to as a *rajniti* (political) song.³⁴

Rajniti songs were not a new type of song. What was new was their predominance in the song repertoires of the groups. The political songs had suddenly become very popular in the wake of the Pro-Democracy Movement and, as result of the King's acquiescence to a multi-party system of government, the women felt freer than in the past to publicly criticize those who ruled the country. (The women's movement was affected by the Democracy Movement, but not subsumed by it.) Most of the songs disparaged the panchayat system or “partyless democracy,” the ruling elite, and the Nepali Congress Party—the party that had won the election in the spring of 1991.

Some lines from one of the *rajniti* songs sung in Naudada—one that happened to favor a Communist party—clearly illustrate these themes:

Oh, dominated sisters of Nepal.

We have so much tyranny.

*The panchas (officials of the former government) ate the flesh
and also the blood [of the people].*

*At last we have the multi-party system.
The thirty year panchayat reign gave so much trouble to women.
They [the panchas] drank raksi by selling young girls
They sold our innocent sisters....
The panchas dominated women.
Now, this type of rule cannot be continued.
...
There is a party called Congress.
If this party wins, women will have to suffer more.
There is another party called Communist.
If this party wins, women will get rights.
The symbol of Communist is sickle and hammer.
Women, let's publicize the communist symbol...*

Not only were these songs different from the previously more common *dukha* variety, they had been produced in a different way. In 1990 a majority of the songs were produced in an overtly collaborative manner either while the women were out working together in the fields or together in the practice sessions before the festival. The songs were considered to flow from the *man* (heart/mind). In 1991, a majority of the songs were based not on feelings and thoughts flowing from the *man*, but on what were considered to be observable facts about historical events. At least half of the songs were copied in part from published songbooks. In 1990, we witnessed no instance of the use of a published songbook as a resource for the creation of a song. In 1991, songbooks were frequently consulted as resources, and on Tij Day some of the songs were even sung directly from songbooks.

The epistemology of the *rajniti* songs demanded that one find out the facts either by witnessing them directly, consulting an eyewitness, or reading about them in newspapers or books. Published songbooks counted as books. The uneducated women of the song groups, lacking sufficient literacy skills, could not author *rajniti* songs, and, because they had had little experience with schools and the political discussions that went on there, did not easily identify with their content. Their lack of education, in effect, marginalized them in this turn of women's activism to party politics. They sang alongside their compatriots who were literate, but could not contribute songs equally as they had when the predominant form of Tij song was the *dukha* song.

This practical exclusion was accompanied by the uneducated women's knowledge of widespread cultural imaginaries of literacy that, in effect, described those without sufficient schooling as "unaware" and "unconscious." This negative identity of the uneducated person in Nepal is deeply anchored in the history of state repression. During the Rana regime and the period of the panchayat system before the Pro-Democracy Struggle, expression of opinions and the dissemination of information were curtailed. The Ranas were especially suspicious of schools. They established very few schools and certainly no general system of public education (Sharma 1992). Lack of awareness and lack of schooling were linked in people's minds with being dominated, suppressed, and backward, and women, who on average received less education than men, were especially vulnerable to such categorizations.³⁵

By the time of the Tij festival in 1991, being a *parhne manche* (educated person) as opposed to a *naparhne manche* (uneducated person) had become more salient in the Tij groups. In the political ferment and freedom following the advent of *bahudal* (the multi-party system), student culture in Naudada was strongly oriented to politics. Composing political songs for the festival was one way school girls could participate and even gain renown among their student friends and associates. The valued symbolic capital of political awareness could be demonstrated through the composition of these important cultural artifacts—*rajniti* songs and the consultation of songbooks.

Moreover, the distinction between the educated versus the uneducated was painful. Uneducated women, in interviews and comments, told us their sense that educated women were more valued than uneducated women, and that, perhaps, the invidious distinction was justified. In 1991 in Naudada, we noted a type of content for *dukha* songs that we had not heard before—descriptions of the negative consequences of being uneducated.³⁶ In the regional centers of Gorkha, Narayangarh and Pokhara, the explicitness of a division between educated and uneducated had progressed even further with all the women forming two types of groups, one composed of school girls singing *rajniti* songs; the other of mostly older women, singing *dukha* songs.³⁷ In Naudada, only one of the many groups was of this new form. The commonality of its members, as noted above, was not their *gaon* and kinship ties, but their status as *bidyarthi* (students) and their affiliation with one of Nepal's recently emerged political parties. What we were witnessing was a transformation of women's activism

toward a more overtly political collective identity that inadvertently valorized educated over uneducated women.

The Power of Cultural Artifacts

This case teaches us to respect the power of material resources, or artifacts, in the production of movement identities. Meaning-making occurs through, and is irretrievably intermeshed with cultural artifacts. We agree with Polletta and Jasper that “collective identities are expressed in cultural materials—names, narratives, symbols, verbal styles, rituals, clothing, and so on” (2001:285). These cultural artifacts—the tangible objects of cultural production—evoke senses of the collective, including sentiments and memories attached to it. As such, Nepali women’s activism in the Tij festival is especially clear in highlighting the double-edged nature of artifacts in collective identity processes. As agents, cultural artifacts can have their effects without intention on the parts of those enacting them. This appeared to be the case with Tij songs.

In 1991, a fissure developed among Tij participants along the lines of education. The epistemology of the *rajniti* songs and the use of songbooks largely ruled “uneducated” women out of the core activity of song-making and brought the distinction of education into the very heart of women’s activism. Tij songs were longstanding tools of critical analysis for Nepali women and a means to evoke a liberatory vision of gender equality. In 1991, these tools transformed into agents of divisive distinctions among women.³⁸ We draw on Vygotsky’s (1978:19-57, 92-104) theory of semiotic mediation to suggest that cultural artifacts—such as Tij songs and songbooks—are relied upon in movements to evoke sentiments, memories and multiple perceptions of the group; and in this case, we see how the development and in/accessibility of *rajniti* songs resulted in an unexpected re-organization of the movement.

By the same token, though collective identity can be reflected upon and treated in an intentional and strategic way, it may well go without reflection. Using Polletta’s words to describe cultural resources, they can operate “behind activists’ backs, as it were” (2004:167). This case cautions against too much focus on the strategic possibility where collective identity becomes understood simply as a resource to be mobilized, and calls for more attention to the place-based cultural practices—and artifacts—that are employed in the coalescing, splintering and reshaping of movements.

Conclusions

In considering the cultural turn in social movements studies over a decade ago, Johnston and Klandermans (1995:20-21) assessed the extent to which collective identity and other movement-related cultural phenomena addressed “the core issues of the field, that is [identifying and explaining regularities in] the rise and decline of social movements and the waxing and waning of movement participation, movement success or failure.” Polletta and Jasper’s review (2001) definitively demonstrates the importance of collective identity as measured by Johnston and Klandermans’s test. In this article, we draw on new developments that incorporate additional aspects of cultural phenomena. The recently emerging, decentered approach to social movement studies calls for less attention to movements as they are formulated by leaders and core members and more attention to movements as place-based, or situated in particular sites and venues. In this approach, in addition, the goal is not so much to retrospectively predict the emergence of movements and their waxing and waning, but rather to identify important processes at play in producing historically particular outcomes. In this paper, we proposed a decentered, dialogic approach to the study of emerging collective movement identities in particular places, and, through examination of three cases drawn from our research, highlighted several dialogical processes involved in the forming and reforming of collective identity, including: the development of figured worlds in relation to which movement actors act and imbue their movement identities with meaning; ongoing importance of dialogic exchanges between the movement and other social actors; and the effects of cultural artifacts that mediate effects of the movement and the formation of identity.

ENDNOTES

¹We would like to thank all the people from our three research sites in Nepal, Scotland and Canada who participated in our research projects. This paper comes out of a collaborative writing project undertaken by the Social Movements Working Group (SMWG) at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and we would like to thank our SMWG colleagues for their encouragement, feedback and camaraderie. In particular, Lynn Owens gave us excellent suggestions for the paper at a SMWG symposium in 2006. Carie Little Hersh provided superb research assistance and we are most grateful. We would also like to thank David Hess and the two anonymous reviewers who commented on an early draft of this paper. Finally, Dorothy Holland notes that Debra Skinner has been a constant co-author on the research in Nepal and thanks Bronislaw Szerszynski for stimulating discussions at Lancaster

University in 2002 about a potential co-authored paper, “Decentering the Collective Actor.” The current paper bears traces of those ideas.

²Edelman (2001) and Edelman and Haugerud (2004) describe some of the reasons anthropologists have been slow to contribute to the social movements literature.

³As emphasized in the case on the global justice movement below, non-participants are important in forming this sense as well.

⁴These are the collectively imagined worlds in which people and groups “do” environmental, social justice or some other form of movement action. Polletta (2004) proposes a different, but related idea as the key element of culture for social movement studies: “institutional schema.” Institutional schema are cultural models, developed either within the movement or outside of it in institutions that a movement opposes, for “doing politics, and science and gender” (2004:162, her emphasis). Other formulations of movement culture include the well known “frames” which were eventually extended to include identities (Hunt et al. 1994). The “figured world” concept, developed in Holland et al. (1998), also theorizes self-investment and self-formation in the culturally imagined worlds drawing on Mead, Bourdieu, Bakhtin, and Vygotsky (Escobar In Press; Holland et al. 1998; Holland and Lave 2001; Holland 2003).

⁵In a critique of what he calls “the new orthodoxy” of movement studies, McDonald (2002) argues that conceptualizations of collective identity from the 1990s are an obstacle to understanding patterns of action and conflict associated with network societies and related movements (2002:110–111). He argues that, in such a society, the “shared struggle for personal experience” may function as a core movement dynamic out-staging the drive to mobilize collective identity in relation to the political system (2002:125, 114). McDonald’s reformulation, though it calls for more openness in exploring the bases for participation in movements, still suggests that cultivating a sense of “belonging together” is a central problem for contemporary movement activists.

⁶Anthropologists have written a great deal about collective identity, but a search of the anthropology journals covered by AnthroSource, revealed only 9 articles that discuss collective identity in relation to social movements. This is not a surprising statistic given the relatively limited contribution by anthropologists to social movement studies.

⁷Our approach is similar to theirs in that we also draw on symbolic interactionism.

⁸For him, collective identity is tied to a basic human need for solidarity (1996:74-75) that is intensified by features of the contemporary period: cultural dislocation and systemic differentiation, intensified global information flows, and increased reflexivity and recognition of the constructedness of society (1996:8-9, 97-113). Central in Melucci’s analysis is his argument that, under such conditions, collective identity is progressively recognized as socially produced rather than structurally given (or given by God, History, Nature, or some other transcendent force) (1995:50; 1996:76; see also Melucci 1989:232).

⁹Melucci (1995:46; see also Melucci 1996 ch. 4) writes that collective identity “enables social actors to act as unified and delimited subjects and to be in control of their own action.” A sentence later he writes, “one may...speak of collective identity as the ability of a collective actor to recognize the effects of its actions and to attribute these actions to itself.” See also Calhoun (1994) and Holland et al. (1998) who analogously emphasize identity as a basis for action.

¹⁰Escobar (In Press:83-91) provides an example when he describes the concept of “region-territory of ethnic groups” that emerged in meetings between indigenous and black activists seeking to define their area of the Columbian Pacific: “This concept [of the Pacific as a “region-territory” of ethnic groups] was to emerge in full regalia over the next two to three years, and to become a necessary point of reference for rethink-

ing development, sustainability and conservation..." in the region. See also "energy justice" in Casas-Cortés et al. (this issue).

¹¹Social practice theory draws on Mead, Bakhtin, Voloshinov, Vygotsky, and Bourdieu, to understand collective identities as dialogically fashioned and refashioned with the cultural resources at hand in the flow of practice, rather than developing through detached, intentional processes (Holland et al. 1998 ch. 3; Holland and Lave 2001:9-30; Satterfield 2002:6). In this approach, by analogy to Mead, collective identity develops over time in "social conduct" (1912), forming tentative and multiple configurations that serve as the bases from which collective actors act.

¹²See also Steinberg (1999).

¹³Satterfield shows how both sides ambivalently adopted scientific discourses in the struggle (applied science of sustainable forestry in the case of the loggers and universal science of ecology and biodiversity in the case of the environmentalists).

¹⁴A primary difference between Polletta's concept of "institutional schema" which she describes as cultural models—developed within or in opposition to a movement—for "doing politics, and science and gender" (2004:162, her emphasis) and "figured worlds" is that Holland et al. (1998) emphasize the identified and culturally elaborated types of actors associated with the figured world, and the investments of self via identification with these imagined actors.

¹⁵Names and locations have been changed to protect the confidentiality of research participants.

¹⁶In an unusual move, the Supreme Court of Canada issued a clarification of the *Marshall* ruling several months after the initial ruling. This clarification, known informally as *Marshall II*, declared that the Canadian state retains the right to restrict Mi'kmaq treaty rights for purposes such as ensuring that state-developed conservation measures are enforced (Coates 2000).

¹⁷See *R. v. Sparrow* (1990).

¹⁸In the late 1960s and early 1970s, many social and economic—and thus cultural—changes took place in Salt Harbour. Chief among these changes were the introduction of electricity and paved roads, as well as a significant increase in social welfare allowances, which allowed more families to buy pre-packaged foods from supermarkets in town rather than relying on fishing, hunting and vegetable gardens for sustenance.

¹⁹Many people over 40 that I interviewed described how they used to spear and sell eels to the local fishmonger ("But they won't buy them like that, anymore" [with spear marks on their sides]); and others said they used to sell or trade salmon with "up-river" non-Natives.

²⁰Of course, this distinction is oversimplified, but reflects the descriptions and sentiments expressed to me by research participants, especially those over 40.

²¹Mi'kmaq treaty rights are based on "the words used in an agreement between an aboriginal community and a European government," whereas an aboriginal right "stems from the fact that aboriginal people were the first inhabitants of North America" (Wicken 2002:6).

²²As Melucci addressed in his 1995 chapter, researchers often play a part in this aspect of the constitution of a movement's identity.

²³In some cases, a movement's self-understanding may be extensively elaborated while alter versions are hardly developed (e.g., "anarchists"). In other cases, alter versions may be developed in great complexity while a purported movement's self-understanding may be only slightly developed, if at all. (For instance, the relatively unorganized categories of people such as "generation Xers," "gangs," or "hippies" are often imag-

ined and treated by corporate and state actors, and perhaps by some who identify with the category, as though they constituted a coherent collective actor, with identifiable interests, attitudes, and behaviors.) Of additional interest is how alter versions of movement identities may prove an obstacle for those trying to develop activist identities that draw on an identity that is already “claimed” and extensively elaborated (e.g., “environmentalists”). See, for example, Holland’s (2004) analysis of a situation faced by activist hunters in southwestern North Carolina. Even though they argued that they were conservationists, they had trouble gaining recognition as an environmental group because the dominant imaginary of environmentalists in the region fit their contenders, the local Sierra Club, and not themselves.

²⁴There were several other large campgrounds set up for activists in the surrounding area, at least one of which was managed by local authorities; the Ecovillage remained largely autonomous from local authorities, including police, and was also largely free of mainstream media reporters.

²⁵See Rosie and Gorringer (2007) for analysis of media coverage that anticipated violent G8 protests in Scotland.

²⁶For more on the concept of self-authoring, see Holland and Lave (2001:10–12).

²⁷After hours of street battles, police did succeed in forcibly “penning” a mixed crowd of 400–500 activists and non-activists in the gated Princes Street Gardens, and then locked all of the exits. We were kept inside the park for several hours until police finally began allowing us out of a designated exit, one by one. Meanwhile they had arrested several designated activist “police liaisons” and “street medics.”

²⁸The CIRCA clowns performed the acts and games they’d trained for, including falling over each other into heaps, occasionally in front of police vans attempting to depart; the INB band members performed the music and marching formations they’d trained for, including marching directly towards and alongside one of the temporary police “pens” containing activists (even after being contained themselves by police earlier). In both cases, these groups intentionally and successfully created confusion and made police work difficult, but in a spirit of creative public performance rather than violent aggression. One key distinction between activist groups like CIRCA and the INB on the one hand, and non-activists engaged in police clashes on the other, is the preparation and coordination—including training, costumes, and cultivation of artistic skills—the activist groups demonstrated. This is not to say that there weren’t global justice activists who did act aggressively towards police and private property during summit actions.

²⁹It is interesting that the women’s rights movement, under these conditions, managed to increase its activities without an increase in its organizational structure.

³⁰This is a complex case involving considerable ethnographic detail. See Holland and Skinner (1995a; 1995b). These references also explain why the Tij festival is not relevant to the kinds of functionalist explanations favored in earlier decades of anthropological theory.

³¹Tij songs unexpectedly attracted Skinner’s (1989) attention as she was carrying out a project on children’s acquisition of gender and caste identities. Her research on children between 8 and 16 turned up an interesting point about a medium that girls choose to convey their sense of self. When she asked them in interviews to tell her about themselves and their lives, they sang Tij songs. Other indications that Tij songs were a medium of self authoring came up in subsequent interviews that we conducted. Women told us that although it was a sin to sing Tij songs after the festival, they kept the songs in their *man* (heart/mind) the year round.

³²Interestingly, the demands, at least from the reports we heard, did not draw on a second form of Tij song—the *rajniti* or political songs—that the groups would so strongly

favor at the Tij festival some six months later. The division we describe below, between the educated and uneducated women, emerged at the time of the festival. It was not evident in the reports of the mobilization.

³³The terms *didī* and *bahini* can be used more broadly to include someone who is like a sister, for instance, a cousin.

³⁴The meaning and distinctions assigned to being educated will become clearer below.

³⁵During the Rana period and even during the advent of public education following Rana rule, women were even less likely than men to receive a formal education. It was still true when we were in Naudada. The literacy rate of men in the subdistrict regional unit of which Naudada is a part was 60.1 percent with a corresponding rate of 23.3 percent for females (Save the Children 1990). It is no surprise that women were still likely to be thought illiterate and not “conscious.”

³⁶These were of the *dukha* variety. They expressed some of these painful sentiments. Here are lines from one such song:

After completing his education, the husband found a job.

He came home to take his wife with him.

[Husband to wife]: I have come here to take you with me.

How much did you study in order to go with me?

[Wife says]: I should not tell him I did not even study.

I have not studied at all.

At my maita [natal home] since my childhood, I herded the livestock.

*If I tried to write ka, [first letter of the Devanagari alphabet], I could
just draw a stick.*

[Husband to wife]: Then you stay at home which is the whole world to you.

What is the use of an uneducated wife?

[I have got] seven thousand rupees,

I'll marry another and take her with me.

[Wife to husband]: Finish my life by killing me with a knife.

³⁷Holland and Skinner (2001) describes tracing songbooks, some from 1990, back to these urbanized areas where they spoke with several authors and producers of the songs and songbooks. Some, though not all, turned out to be college women who participated in student political groups. It was not unusual to find published *rajniti* songs that address their intended audience as, “Mothers and sisters who are in darkness.” Holland and Skinner were told explicitly that the songbooks’ purpose was to reach women who were “unaware” and “politically unconscious.”

³⁸Another possible effect of the songbooks was that rural women like those in Naudada would become dependent on those on college campuses who were writing the songbooks.

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